



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

NEWS

ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH – GOVERNOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 9, 2008

CONTACTS:

Rebecca Rausch 217/782.7355
David Rudduck 312/814.3158
Brian Williamsen (IDOT) 217/558.0517
Judy Diethelm (BLU MOON) 310/245.1166
Marcus Jadotte (NASCAR) 386/239.2853

Gov. Blagojevich announces traffic safety partnership with NASCAR as 2008 Sprint Cup season picks up speed

*Joint traffic safety outreach program to include two high-profile national
campaigns; will be promoted at Chicagoland Speedway this summer*

SPRINGFIELD – Governor Rod R. Blagojevich today announced a unique, first of its kind, traffic safety partnership between NASCAR and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). Through this partnership, IDOT will promote safe driving at the NASCAR Sprint Cup and NASCAR Nationwide Series races at Chicagoland Speedway in Joliet, this July. IDOT will team with Chicagoland Speedway and NASCAR to establish a pilot program that will promote the *Buckle Up America* campaign and the *Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk* campaign, as part of the annual weekend of racing.

“Illinois is taking the lead with this initiative, and our partnership with NASCAR and Chicagoland Speedway on these traffic safety campaigns is a great way to get an important message out to the driving public,” said Gov. Blagojevich. “This high-profile weekend will provide an excellent opportunity to make sure everyone buckles their safety belts, and that no one drives while impaired.”

Illinois is the first state to formally pilot such a program with NASCAR, an initiative that will provide valuable fan outreach components. Fans will be invited to sign the *Buckle Up America* pledge; I Pledge to BUCKLE UP, Every Trip, Every Time and that all passengers in my vehicle will be properly restrained at all times. Adult NASCAR fans will also have the opportunity to sign the *Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk* pledge, which includes agreeing to being or always having a designated driver. Fans who take the pledge to be a sober designated driver at the race will be entered into random prize drawings.

-more-

453**08

AD 1

Fans will also be able to sign an online pledge at www.dot.il.gov/safety.html and send their pledges to IDOT to be entered into the random drawings, which will take place prior to the Sprint Cup race at Chicagoland Speedway, the evening of Saturday, July 12.

“We know the racing on the track will be exciting, but off the track we want to make sure everyone plays it safe and gets where they need to go without incident,” said IDOT Secretary Milton R. Sees. “We are very happy to be able to partner with NASCAR on these safety initiatives, and look forward to a big response from race fans.”

Race fans will also have the opportunity to participate in the *Buckle Up America Challenge* by signing the *Buckle Up America* pledge and downloading an online version. The goal is for participants to encourage family members, friends, schoolmates, co-workers, and others to join them in the commitment to wear their safety belt every time they get into a vehicle.

IDOT will also invite racing teams, drivers and their corporate sponsors to join the efforts and support the two safety initiatives by offering prizes and benefits for fans who pledge, and by helping carry these traffic safety messages.

“The pilot program with IDOT builds on NASCAR’s partnership with NHTSA and represents the kind of relationship we are excited to build,” said Marcus Jadotte, NASCAR managing director of public affairs. “We will reach millions of NASCAR fans with life saving messages, while enhancing the NASCAR fan experience. It’s a win-win for everyone.”

“Teaming up with a state partner to become the first NASCAR venue to officially embrace a high profile designated driver message is something we are very proud of,” said Matthew Alexander, President of Chicagoland Speedway. “Reminding our fans to put safety first during our NASCAR race weekend is just another way of helping us achieve a goal we set for our facility every year: consistently providing our fans with a very exciting and safe experience all weekend long.”

The 2008 program is a continuation of IDOT’s successful partnership with NASCAR and the Chicagoland Speedway; in 2007, the partnership successfully promoted the message of “*Buckle Up, Every Trip, Every Time*,” with the *Buckle Up America Challenge* facilitated by BLU MOON Foundation. BLU MOON Foundation is a non-profit that serves the public interest through creating, managing and collaborating on cause-related educational programs and national campaigns.

###

BUCKLE UP AMERICA: is a campaign encouraging proper safety belt and child safety seat use in the United States, coordinated by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. www.buckleupamerica.gov.

BLU MOON Group: is a strategic marketing and communications firm that specializes in sport, entertainment and cause marketing. Our core services include; strategic plan development, program and campaign development and management, integrated brand management, sponsorship procurement, facilitation of relationships with key stakeholders, and project PR.

-more-

BLU MOON Foundation: is a CA based non profit organization (#35-2301325) and is the public benefit component of BLU MOON Group. Its mission is to advance cause marketing through the creation and management of cause-related educational programs and national campaigns.

Chicagoland Speedway: and Route 66 Raceway are wholly-owned by International Speedway Corporation ("ISC"), a leading promoter of motorsports activities. ISC owns and/or operates 13 of the nation's major motorsports entertainment facilities, including Daytona International Speedway (home of the Daytona 500), as well as owns or has interest in a number of other motorsports-related businesses. www.chicagolandspeedway.com.

IDOT: The mission of IDOT is to provide safe, cost-effective transportation for Illinois in ways that enhance quality of life, promote economic prosperity, and demonstrate respect for our environment. We will accomplish our mission while making the following principles the hallmark of all our work: Safety, Integrity, Responsiveness, Quality, and Innovation.

www.dot.state.il.us.

NASCAR: Began in 1948, is the sanctioning body for one of America's premier sports. NASCAR is the #1 spectator sport in the U.S. – with 17 of the top 20 highest-attended sporting events in the U.S., the #2 rated regular season sport on network TV with broadcasts in 150 countries and has a fan base that purchases more than \$2 billion in annual licensed product sales. These fans are the most brand loyal in all of sports and as a result, more Fortune 500 companies participate in NASCAR than any other sport. www.nascar.com.

NHTSA: (The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration), under the [U.S. Department of Transportation](http://www.transportation.gov) (DOT), was established by the Highway Safety Act of 1970, as the successor to the National Highway Safety Bureau, to carry out safety programs under the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966 and the Highway Safety Act of 1966. The USDOT NASCAR traffic safety alliance leverages the national organizations combined resources to encourage all race fans to take the same common sense approach to auto safety that NASCAR follows on the track. www.nhtsa.gov.